

and foresight. For example, AOC management did not initially set project priorities to determine how the six projects under development would be rolled out. Management only became involved in the development of NCAWARE when they received pressure from stakeholders and the legislature because the project was behind schedule. In response, AOC management directed the Technology Services Division to pilot NCAWARE without further delay, and AOC management reported to the Program Evaluation Division the directive was accompanied by a threat of job loss for lack of performance.

Similar patterns of communication failures exist between the Technology Services Division and the Court Services Division, which provides training and user support for existing and new applications in the courts. The Court Services Division is crucial to the implementation of new applications because it sets the training schedule for users, and hence, the implementation schedule. The Court Services Division was reluctant to provide the NCAWARE implementation schedule to the Program Evaluation Division—an AOC administrator told the Program Evaluation Division no one, including AOC management, sees the implementation schedule because it is subject to change. Altering project schedules is a reasonable and often necessary aspect of project planning; however, given the number of AOC and court staff necessary to complete a statewide implementation of a new \$13 million application, open communication of scheduling documents is a key element to success. Furthermore, communication breakdowns within AOC not only affect internal operations, but they also affect the users of the court system.

Planning for projects has little buy-in from users or staff—other than management—because there is limited participation in the Technology Services Division planning process. Decisions are made at the management level without a formal process for decision making. This approach leaves stakeholders unclear as to how priorities are determined. All projects under development serve a valuable purpose, and different key groups are affected by each project. Handling competing interests requires that priorities for resources be determined in a rational and consistent manner, with consideration for all groups.

Automating documents related to discovery is a primary concern of district attorneys. One district attorney said, “I have no clue how they set priorities, but I am sure money and resources affect them. However, another county offered to pay [for their own system] due to the high stakes [of operating without one], but got nowhere [with AOC].” Several district attorneys and the Conference of District Attorneys expressed frustration with how AOC has handled the availability of appropriate technology for the discovery process.

AOC has made NCAWARE its priority over the last 5 years. It has spent over \$13 million and reassigned staff from other projects. However, some court personnel questioned the rationale behind investing so much money and staff time into NCAWARE to the detriment of other projects. AOC personnel stated NCAWARE impacts law enforcement more than the courts ability to process cases, which is the function of CCIS-Clerk and the CCIS-DA. For example, several users interviewed by evaluation staff expressed concern that the significant reduction in data entry time for the clerks’ staff